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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON IDP SITUATION IN PAKISTAN

REF: Islamabad 940

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The UN and partner agencies have now set up three IDP camps, two in Mardan and another in Swabi to accommodate a total of 1150 refugee families. All camps are being developed by UNHCR site planners, and WHO and UNICEF are developing water/sanitation and health facilities. As of May 4, 194 families from Dir and Buner have registered in the camps, and 4,304 families have registered outside of camps in Swabi, Mardan, and Charsadda Districts. WFP has distributed food items to approximately 21,000 new IDPs since registration began. UN agencies report that the Swat District Commissioner is now requiring evacuation of Mingora and suggest that a resulting displacement of up to 200,000 additional IDPs would severely strain existing resources. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) UN and partner agencies were active over the weekend in Mardan and Swabi Districts. They, with local authorities, have now set up three camps to receive IDPs. In Mardan, a camp at Jalala will accept up to 600 families, and another at Shaikh Shahzad will accommodate up to 400 families. UNHCR has already provided tents and NFIs for 200 families, and more will be sent as the camps are developed in the coming days. In Swabi District, one camp at Yar Hussain is being developed to accommodate up to 150 families.

¶3. (SBU) The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has begun registering new arrivals from Lower Dir and Buner at humanitarian hubs in Mardan, Charsadda and Swabi. Food and NFI items are being distributed at the point of registration by UNHCR partner Sarhad Rural Support Program (SRSP). UNHCR reports that as of May 4, a total of 194 families (1,422 individuals) from Lower Dir and Buner have registered in camps. Outside of camps, 4,304 families (25,824 individuals) have registered in Swabi, Mardan, and Charsadda Districts. Of those registered outside the camp, 72 percent come from Buner, and 28 percent come from Lower Dir. Registration staff have reported congestion and inadequate staffing, but UNHCR and the Minister of Social Development have agreed that teams will be strengthened to speed up registration.

¶4. (SBU) While UNHCR reports that systems are set for accepting newly displaced persons into IDP camps, there remain concerns for IDPs in host communities. Communities already host a large number of IDPs, and coping mechanisms are being stretched.

¶5. (SBU) The UN assessment mission reported that most of the IDPs from Buner had to leave their homes abruptly and without warning as the military operations began. Many left with nothing, including their identify cards (NICs). On a more positive note, most told

UNHCR that they would return home as soon as possible because it is now harvest season in Buner.

16. (SBU) An accurate count of new IDPs continues to be elusive. A USAID/OFDA implementing partner with programs in both Lower Dir and Buner reports from field staff on the ground that there are an estimated 17,000 families displaced in Lower Dir. They say that 65 percent of the Lower Dir IDPs remain in Lower Dir, mostly with host families. The others have moved out to Malakand, Mardan and Charsadda Districts. They believe that 30,000 have come out of Buner. Al-Khidmat Foundation, a local NGO that is providing warm meals to IDPs, estimates that as many as 35,000 families have fled Buner. Another local NGO active in the region conducted an assessment over the weekend and believes that as of noon on Sunday, May 3, 9,000 families had arrived in Mardan and Swabi from Buner. All reports indicate that most of the new IDPs are staying with host families.

17. (SBU) As of May 5, WFP reports that it has distributed food items to approximately 21,000 new IDPs since registration began. There are now two WFP distribution hubs in Mardan, and, as of May 5, WFP will have two others in Swabi. WHO is working with local health officials and providing health services in new camps and mobile services in Mardan. WHO is looking for a partner organization to provide the same in Swabi. Water/sanitation work is also progressing in the new camps. UNICEF reports that water tanks have been placed in the camps, and tankering services have begun. Latrine construction is ongoing. UNICEF also reports that two schools are already functioning in Yar Hussain camp (Swabi) and that schools will be opened soon in the Mardan camps.

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18. (SBU) At a May 5 General Coordination Meeting hosted by OCHA for donors and UN and NGO humanitarian assistance providers, a major concern was rumblings out of Swat that the District Commissioner is now requiring the evacuation of Mingora. Humanitarian agencies suggest that such an evacuation could result in up to 200,000 additional IDPs. UNHCR expressed concern that pipelines were meant to meet humanitarian needs prior to the Dir and Buner displacements.

While HCR has 21,000 NFI kits available at present and HCR expects new supplies within two weeks, the needs of those IDPs who have not come out of Dir as well as an additional displacement from Swat would severely strain existing resources. WFP has prepositioned food on the supposition of more people coming out of Dir, Buner, and Swat. WFP is currently feeding 500,000 IDPs and has planned for 600,000, but displacement of another 200,000 would exceed the planned worst case scenario.

FEIERSTEIN